Programme Specification

Science Communication [Frenchay]

Version: 2025-26, v2.0, Validated

Contents

Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Science Communication [Frenchay]

Highest award: MSc Science Communication

Interim award: PGCert Science Communication

Interim award: PGDip Science Communication

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: No

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CHSS School of Applied Sciences, College of Health, Science & Society

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies: Not applicable

Modes of delivery: Full-time, Part-time

Entry requirements: For the current entry requirements see the UWE public website.

For implementation from: 01 September 2020

Programme code: P90012

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The MSc Science Communication provides an opportunity for students from both scientific and non-scientific backgrounds to explore the theory and practice related to the communication of science. The course can be taken full time or part time , and teaching is delivered through a block structure that allows a flexible approach to learning to support students with work or caring responsibilities. Assessments are designed to be authentic and to represent skills required for a professional career in science communication. The programme culminates in an independent project where students are given the opportunity to explore a topic of interest and develop, and practice, their practical and research skills.

Features of the programme: Special features of the programme include its block structure which supports students to flexibly manage their learning alongside other responsibilities. The position of the programme within the Science Communication Unit at UWE enables a grounding within contemporary research and practice. The combination of practice and theory, alongside access to a wide range of organisations and academic specialists, provides opportunities for students to network and develop their science communication practice and professional identity.

Following a common grounding in the core modules (Science and Society and Contemporary Science Communication), students are able to choose two optional modules from the following: Science on Air and on Screen, Science in Public Spaces, and Writing Science. These practical modules provide students with the opportunity to build a portfolio of skills and expertise required by science communication practitioners and researchers.

Educational Aims: The programme is designed for part-time and full-time study and seeks to draw and build on the experience of students, regardless of whether their current role includes science communication.

The specific aims of the programme are to:
Examine the concepts and principles upon which the effective communication of science is based;
Analyse the scope and purpose of science communication and encourage a critical evaluation of the approaches studied;

Provide an opportunity for students from a range of backgrounds to develop the skills required to communicate science in their chosen context;
Provide an innovative mode of attendance designed to maximise the programmes accessibility;
Build on the previous experience of students and encourage learning at work;
Encourage students to develop the ability to conduct independent enquiry;
Structure and underpin the curriculum using a balance from current consultancy and research.

Teaching delivery is through mixture of lectures, workshops, seminars, guided online learning and activities to support students to gain theory and practical skills, and to be research informed in their approach. Students also develop transferable skills throughout the programme such as project management, planning, time management, negotiation and team working, and presentation skills.

The programme is designed to maximise employability and graduates work in science communication or a related field including public engagement, science writing and TV production.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

PO1. Have developed masters level understanding of knowledge, theory and concepts relevant to science communication, and an awareness of the evolving and complex interactions between science and society

PO2. Have developed a critical understanding of the concept of “publics” and how it is applied in a science communication context, including considerations around equity, diversity, and inclusion

PO3. Be able to critically evaluate research and science communication methods to support the creation of evidence-based science communication practice

PO4. Have developed an understanding of diverse approaches for practical science communication

PO5. Have enhanced their ability to effectively develop, present, and critically evaluate science communication activities and are reflective in their practice

PO6. Have undertaken an independent project, developing their planning, management and communication skills alongside their own research

Assessment strategy: Each taught module includes opportunities for students to develop real-world experience, for example, developing live presentations and demonstrations, or creating a portfolio of work. In addition students carry out assessments which develop and assess their critical academic and theoretical grounding, including reflective practice, research design and report writing. All summative assessments are supported by module specific opportunities for formative assessment and feedback.

Some assessments, including the research project, can be carried out in collaboration with a professional organisation and therefore encompass a significant element of professional feedback from practicing science communicators, researchers, and potential employers.

Student support: One to one meetings with the programme leader are embedded in the programme and students are encouraged to access UWE support as soon as possible, if required. The student representative is also part of the student support system and communicates concerns to the programme team, as required. Student-staff meetings and regular opportunities for feedback are provided to ensure that students are given the opportunity to inform best practice and raise concerns. In addition, MSc Science Communications are supported by the School Postgraduate Tutor.

Each module is supported by extensive VLE materials, including for example, additional reading, grey literature, videos, blogs and media materials. In addition students have access to a group area where they can access information on forthcoming seminars and presentations, relevant science communication events and activities, as well as placement and job opportunities, and careers advice.

Students with additional needs are provided with full support by Student Services at UWE including welfare, disability and psychological support and counselling. Students with disabilities or learning differences are needs assessed and any specific learning support measures implemented through the support of the programme and module team.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

Full time students must take the 180 credits from the modules in Year 1.
Part time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Full-time)

Full-time students must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

30 credits gained on UWE Science Communication CPD (USSKNQ-30-M Applied Research Skills OR USSKNP-15-M Online and Media Writing AND USSKNS-15-M Creative Science Communication & Public Engagement) may also be accepted as one of the optional modules in agreement with the programme leader.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
USSJM4-30-M	Science and Society 2025-26	30
USSJPR-60-M	Science Communication Project 2025-26	60
USSJM3-30-M	Contemporary Science Communication 2025-26	30

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Part-time)

Part-time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
USSJM4-30-M	Science and Society 2025-26	30
USSJM3-30-M	Contemporary Science Communication 2025-26	30

Year 1 Optional Modules (Full-time)
Full-time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Optional Modules (Full-time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
USSJYU-30-M	Science in Public Spaces 2025-26	30
USSJC4-30-M	Science On Air and On Screen 2025-26	30
USSJC8-30-M	Writing Science 2025-26	30

Year 2
Full time students continue on and complete the Science Communication Project module (USSJPR-60-M) in Year 2.

Part time students must take 60 credits from the Optional Modules Group 1 in Year 2 and MAY additionally take USSJPR-60-M Science Communication Project in Year 2 or they may choose to take this module in Year 3.

30 credits gained on UWE Science Communication CPD (USSKNQ-30-M Applied Research Skills OR USSKNP-15-M Online and Media Writing AND USSKNS-15-M Creative Science Communication & Public Engagement) may also be accepted as one of the optional modules in agreement with the programme leader.

Year 2 Optional Modules Group 1
Part-time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Optional Modules Group 1

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
USSJYU-30-M	Science in Public Spaces 2026-27	30
USSJC4-30-M	Science On Air and On Screen 2026-27	30
USSJC8-30-M	Writing Science 2026-27	30

Year 2 Optional Modules Group 2
Part-time students may choose to take USSJPR-60-M Science Communication Project in Year 2 or they may choose to take this module in Year 3.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit

USSJPR-60-M	Science Communication Project 2026-27	60

Year 3
Part-time students must take the module USSJPR-60-M Science Communication Project in Year 3, if they did not register on the module in Year 2.

Year 3 Optional Modules
Part-time students must take the module USSJPR-60-M Science Communication Project in Year 3, if they did not register on the module in Year 2.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
USSJPR-60-M	Science Communication Project 2027-28	60

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Based in the world-class Science Communication Unit and led by expert staff currently working in this constantly evolving field, this flexible programme is directly informed by current practice to combine theory and practice, and gives students excellent access to strong industry links.

Students leaving this programme are equipped to consider the role of communication in a variety of settings, including via the media, through museums and science centres, community events and festivals, as well as in policy settings and will be equipped with the communication, project management and evaluation skills required of contemporary science communicators.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

QAA UK Quality Code for HE
National qualification framework
Subject benchmark statements
Qualification characteristics for Master's degrees
University strategies and policies
Staff research projects

External Benchmarks:

Students taking the MSc Science Communication will be expected to study at the cutting edge of this rapidly developing multi-disciplinary subject area. Successful completion of the degree will require students to deal with complex scientific issues and how these should or could be communicated to wider audiences; this requires an element of creativity as well as rationally and sensitively tackling and solving specific communication problems. The learning outcomes have been designed with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in mind.

As there is not a specific QAA benchmark statement for science communication, the award team has made reference to the QAA benchmark statement for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies, Biosciences and for Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies. These offer guidance on the level of communication skills that can be expected of graduates in these disciplines. These have been used as a starting point from which to build more in depth and specialised skills.

University Strategies and Policies:

In line with the University's teaching and learning policies, the course has been devised using an innovative mode of attendance that will facilitate participation of students undertaking the course while in full or part-time employment.

As highlighted, the research and practice of the Science Communication Unit supports teaching over the programme. Members of the programme team have an international reputation for creative approaches to science communication and have regularly contributed to the REF.

Staff attend UWE learning and teaching conferences and events. All new teaching staff within the Unit undertake the UWE PGCert Learning and Teaching in HE and are provided with a mentor and given opportunities for peer observation. All core teaching staff have Fellowship or Senior Fellowship of the HEA.

Students are pointed to various UWE services for support, including careers,

counselling, volunteering, placements, student advice, disability, and the library, amongst others. Care is taken to monitor any UWE schemes of potential relevance to students such as PAL, English Language Support or schemes like espresso-Maths, and these are utilised when they are of relevance to postgraduate students.

Modules keep up-to-date with current UWE policies and procedures. For example, the Science Communication Project module revisits its research ethics advice to students on an annual basis to reflect any changes or updates in UWE or external procedures.

Modules also review their content for alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.